

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

DRC-01 /138 W

----- 123966

R 221105Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2558

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L LOURENCO MARQUES 0380

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PGOV, PINS, ECON, ELAB, MZ

SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE OF MINISTER OF INTER-TERRITORIAL
COORDINATION

REF: A) LOURENCO MARQUES 373; B) LOURENCO MARQUES A-85

1. DURING PRESS CONFERENCE REPORTED REF A, DR. ANTONIO DE ALMEIDA SANTOS, MINISTER OF INTER-TERRITORIAL COORDINATION, PROMINENT OPPOSITIONIST OF FORMER REGIME AND LONG TIME RESIDENT OF MOZAMBIQUE, FOUND HIMSELF IN FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT OF MOZAMBIQUE JOURNALISTS, MOST OF WHOM ARE OF LIBERAL PERSUASION. INASMUCH AS SANTOS HAS FREQUENTLY MADE HIS VIEWS KNOWN THROUGH OPEN LETTERS AND INTERVIEWS CARRIED BY PRESS (SEE REF B), MANY OF HIS STATEMENTS AND ANSWERS CONVEYED LITTLE NEW. IN HIS CAPACITY AS MINISTER, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPLICATIONS ASSUME NEW IMPORTANCE.

2. IT APPARENT DURING PRESS CONFERENCE THAT LABOR UNREST AND DEMANDS ONE OF PRINCIPAL CURRENT CONCERNS OF GOVERNMENT. IN QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD, SANTOS APPEARED PARTICULARLY BITTER TOWARD LACK OF COMPREYENSION BEING SHOWN BY WORKERS -- ONLY DISCOVERY HE SAID HE HAD MADE DURING FACT FINDING MISSION. HE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO UNREASONABLE DEMANDS OF DOCK WORKERS, WHO WANT OVER TEN TIMES CURRENT WAGE RATE. INCREASED WAGES OF SUCH MAGNITUDE, HE SAID, WOULD REQUIRE NEGOTIATION OF NEW TRANSPORTATION RATES WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. HIGHER RATES, IN TURN, COULD LEAD TO LESS TRAFFIC THROUGH MOZAMBIQUE PORTS AND CONSEQUENTLY TO LESS EMPLOYMENT. SANTOS GAVE IMPRESSION GOVERNMENT WILL NOT HESITATE TO TAKE UNPOPULAR DECISION OF COMPULSORY WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS IF LABOR SITUATION CONTINUES TO BE CHAOTIC.

3. WHEN HENRY KAMM OF NY TIMES ASKED HIM IF PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE WAR IF FRELIMO REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE, AND WHETHER COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST MINISTERS WOULD GO ALONG WITH DECISION TO CONTINUE WAR, SANTOS REPLIED HE COULD NOT ACCEPT HYPOTHESIS FRELIMO WOULD REFUSE TO NEGOTIATE. WHILE SANTOS MAY BELIEVE IN "GOOD NATURE" OF FRELIMO LEADERS, IT APPEARS LIKELY FROM PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS (REF B) THAT SANTOS PREPARED MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS NECESSARY FOR FRELIMO TO ACCEPT CEASEFIRE. SINCE HE HAS STATED HE BELIEVES FRELIMO HAS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF BLACK MOZAMBICANS AND IS WINNING WAR, IT EVIDENT HE UNWILLING TO PUT OBSTACLES TO RESULT HE THINKS INEVITABLE -- INDEPENDENCE OF MOZAMBIQUE UNDER FRELIMO -- CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT. REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW MUCH FREEDOM OF ACTION SANTOS HAS, BUT RIGHT NOW IT LOOKS AS THOUGH EVENTS LEADING TO INDEPENDENCE OF MOZAMBIQUE COULD MOVE MORE QUICKLY THAN ANYONE (INCLUDING FRELIMO) HAD PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT POSSIBLE.

4. WITH RESPECT TO FUTURE RELATIONS OF MOZAMBIQUE WITH SOUTH AFRICA, SANTOS REITERATED HIS CONVICTION THAT ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE WOULD FORCE MODUS VIVENDI BETWEEN TWO STATES. IN CONTRAST WITH PRIVATE STANCE (REF B), IN WHICH SANTOS ACCEPTED POSSIBILITY MOZAMBIQUE MIGHT BECOME BASE

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OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY AGAINST OUTH AFRICA, HIS PUBLIC POSITION UNDERSTANDABLY IS THAT FRELIMO GUERRILLAS WILL PUT DOWN ARMS, DEVOTE ENERGIES TO PEACEFUL RECONSTRUCTION OF MOZAMBIQUE, AND CARRY ON THE CLOSE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA SO VITAL TO THE TWO COUNTRIES.
VAN OSS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LOUREN00380
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740127-1060
From: LOURENCO MARQUES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740527/aaaaaxrt.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) LOURENCO MARQUES 373; B) LOURENCO
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <28 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS CONFERENCE OF MINISTER OF INTER-TERRITORIAL COORDINATION
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PGOV, PINS, ECON, ELAB, MZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005